

“Life of the Spirit + Life of the Soul”

Special Presentation

1 Corinthians 2:6-3:9.

The Rev. Ted Wood

November 18, 2022

Ted: The Lord be with you.

Brave Men: And also with you.

Ted: Let us pray. O Jesus, out of Your great love and mercy toward us You gave us a new birth in the Spirit. We pray that by the power of that Spirit that we may walk in the Spirit and not walk in the soul, and not walk in our flesh, so that we may reflect your glory to the world. And we pray this in Your name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen.

Ted: Okay. Our church has a Wednesday evening Bible study and it’s really good. I don’t know why it’s really good, but it’s really good. It’s a Zoom Bible study. And at first we didn’t know whether that was a good idea or not, whether we ought to try to meet together or get together by Zoom. But there are very old folks who can’t get out, and very often this is their only link to the life of the church, the life of Christ in the church. So it’s a great idea and it’s a wonderful time. I’m always texting the pastor afterward, talking about a home run that he taught. There’s a lot of discussion.

I just wanted to reflect on one thing before I talk about the life of the spirit and the life of the soul. The lesson at the Wednesday evening Bible study was the parable of the mustard seed. Now we all know that parable, don’t we? This is from Mark the fourth chapter.

“And He said, ‘To what can we compare the kingdom of God? Or what parable shall we use for it? It is like a grain of mustard seed which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth. Yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants, and puts out large branches so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.’”

Now that’s a simple little—

Don Maurer: Ted, you forgot to say something.

Ted: What?

Don: This is the word of the Lord.

Ted: This is the word of the Lord. Actually I was going to do that in a separate reading, but—

Don: Okay; all right. *(Laughter)*

Ted: Well, this is the word of the Lord #1. *(Laughter)* Thanks a lot for keeping me straight, Don; I’ll remember that. *(Laughter)* But the thing is, I don’t want to talk about this; this is just a lead-in to what I want to talk about today. And that is that it was interesting, as we began to discuss this parable, that so much of the discussion was about how it applies to me personally—how my faith starts out small and then grows into a great thing.

But the pastor caught us up after he had let us go out for a while. He caught us up and said, “Now wait a second. That’s not how it starts.” It starts off, “To what can I compare the kingdom of God? Or what parable shall I use? It is like a grain of mustard seed.” So this parable is not about me and my personal faith journey; it’s about the kingdom of God, or as the pastor was saying, the rule of the Messiah. What is that like?

And it was so interesting, because even as he laid that out people kept returning and making comments and giving illustrations about their own personal journeys of faith. We just couldn’t get away from it. And the thing that I observed is that it is so hard to think about our life and our

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journey and reality, to think about reality from God’s perspective and not my perspective—not what I need or what is happening in my life, but what God is doing. Well I was just struck by that, and that’s kind of why I got into talking about this lesson today which really picks up on 1 Corinthians. And I’ll just turn your attention to it if you want.

I read 1 Corinthians as a personal devotional; I went through it several months ago with my daily journaling, reading and prayer. And then I started to teach on it at our church and all of that. And then I did 2 Corinthians for a personal devotional. And I want to tell you, brothers, these are difficult books, and especially 2 Corinthians. Some of the most precious verses in Scripture are found in 2 Corinthians. But some of the most difficult things to understand are also found there.

So this morning I wanted to kind of talk about the life of the spirit and the life of the soul. And if you’ll just follow with me in 1 Corinthians, Paul begins in that first chapter. *“Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle.”* He always makes that point: “I’m an apostle,” which means “I’ve seen the Lord,” which means “I have authority,” which means “you need to listen to what I’m saying because I have the authority in Jesus Christ—and the other apostles do too—to preach and to teach as a pastor.”

So he introduces the letter—1 Corinthians—in verse 2, *“to the church of God that is in Corinth.”* Then he goes on in verse 4 to give great thanksgiving to God for the Corinthians in the church there. *“I give thanks to my God always for you, because of the grace of God that was given to you in Christ Jesus.”* So verses 4-9 talk about what God is doing, and not how great the Corinthians are. You see that in verse 9: *“God is faithful, by whom you were called.”*

Then he gets into it in verse 10. *“I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree.”* Verse 11: *“For it has been reported to me by Chloe’s people that there is quarreling among you brothers. What I mean is that each of you say, ‘I follow Paul,’ or ‘I follow Apollos,’ or ‘I follow Cephas,’ or ‘I follow Christ.’”*

I’ve come to the conclusion that this is not so much about divisions as a rejection of apostolic teaching because Paul later mentions it in other places. He says, “Cephas and Apollos and I, we all agree; we have the same gospel that we’re preaching. But you guys are making up different gospels. You’re making it a problem in the church.”

Then he goes on in verse 18. He begins to talk about the wisdom and the power of God. *“For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to those of us who are being saved is the power of God.”* So he talks in the next verses about why preaching, why the apostolic message, why that is a problem for the two kinds of people that are in the world. There are Jews. And it’s a problem for them because the preaching of the cross is a stumbling-block for them. I mean, we all know this. How can the Savior, how can the Messiah die a terrible death? And then it’s a problem for the Greeks or the Gentiles because it just doesn’t make sense. It’s a silly story, it’s foolishness. The Greek word is empty; it’s an empty story.

But then he goes on to say that not only is the message a problem for Jews and Gentiles, but it’s also a problem for you. Verse 26: *“But consider your calling, brothers: for not many of you were wise by worldly standards. Not many of you were powerful, not many of you were of noble birth.”* So he’s saying that not only is the message foolishness and weak and folly, but you are foolish, weak and full of folly.

And then he goes on to say not only that. But in chapter 2 verse 1: *“And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom.”* I have a problem too. So we’re all in a weak position. We’re all in a silly, foolish position, compared to how the world perceives things.

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And then he begins to talk about the wisdom of the world and how we can know the things of God, which again is so important to me. I need to know what God describes as reality, not what I perceive as reality. God sets the standard. The mustard seed story is about the kingdom of God. It's not primarily—it is in a secondary sense, but not primarily—about me and my spiritual journey. And so in the same way we begin to get this wonderful teaching that talks about what the wisdom of God is—the life of the soul and the life of the spirit. So I'm going to read, Don; now we can say it at the end of this. *(Laughter)* I'm going to read chapter 2 verse 6 through chapter 3 verse 9, and then break that down.

“For yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not the wisdom of this age, or the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. For as it is written:”—and this is one of the great verses in Scripture,—“That ‘no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love Him.’”

“These things God has prepared for us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, that we might understand the things freely given to us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.”

“The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him. He is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. For ‘who has understood the mind of the LORD, so as to instruct Him?’ But we have the mind of Christ.

“But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. Even now you are not ready, for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving only in a human way? For when one says, ‘I follow Paul’ and another ‘I follow Apollos,’ are you not being merely human?

“What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. He who plants and he who waters are one. And each will receive his wages according to his labor. For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.” Now this is the word of the Lord.

Brave Men: Thanks be to God.

Ted: As you heard me read that, any thoughts that occur to you? Any reaction to having heard that? Does anything grab you? You don't have to think very deeply because we're going to get into it. But did anything grab you? Yes, Don?

Don Maurer: I'm sure all of us have heard the expression that Paul uses to quote I believe it's from Isaiah. That's not Isaiah; it might be Zechariah. Anyway, *“No eye has seen, nor ear has heard.”*

Ted: Yes.

Don: *“Nor has it entered into the heart of man what God has prepared for those who love Him.”*

Transcriber's Note: NKJV.

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Don: How many of us have heard that this is referring to heaven and all the joys of heaven, and what’s going to await us in glory. I’m sure that in the Old Testament context that it’s probably true. But Paul says that God has revealed it to us by His Spirit.

Ted: Yeah.

Don: And so I’m kind of wondering how He has revealed it to us by His Spirit.

Ted: Okay. Well thank you very much, because that has a lot to do with where the revealing takes place and where the receptors are as God reveals. And that’s what I’m going to talk about right now, Don. Thanks, straight man, for leading me into that. *(Laughter)* Because I think it’s very important for us to understand how our whole person is ordered. And so I’m just going to go through this outline; you have that in front of you. And blasting off from 1 Corinthians I took the second chapter and the sixth, ninth and tenth verses, kind of stringing them together and taking them apart so there was a consistent message. And I’m going to read it again.

“Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, ... a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. But as it is written, that ‘No eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined what God has prepared for those who love Him.’ These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit.”

So with point #2 I’m going to talk about what I’m calling the primer of the spirit and the soul. And I’m taking the verse from 1 Thessalonians 5:23: *“May the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely.”* That is, may the God of peace make you holy; you must be holy for the Lord God is holy. So Paul is saying, “May the God of peace make you holy; sanctify you completely.” *“And may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless.”* The Greek word there for soul is *psuche*. We get our word *psychology* from that.

And this is my take on that. I believe that we as humans are three parts—body, soul and spirit. Now there are those who don’t believe that. So they may challenge me, and that’s fine. But I think it just makes sense to me: body, soul and spirit. Others say there is the body, and then the soul/spirit, that they are basically the same thing. But for the sake of talking about this this morning I want to talk about this in terms of body, soul and spirit.

Now I’m going to describe what I’ve illustrated here with a diagram. It’s a very rough diagram; I’m sorry. And it’s three concentric circles. The inner circle is the spirit. Out from that is the soul, the *psuche*. The body is the *soma*, then the *psuche*. And the *psuche*, the soul, is made up of three parts: mind, heart and emotions. And then the outer part is the body.

So in that diagram you have the inner circle, then the outer circle and then the far outer circle; there are three circles. In the upper right hand corner there is the Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And below, on the lower right hand corner, you have spiritual people which I call the body of Christ. And in the lower left hand corner you have a circle that says ‘natural people.’

And I describe in 2A1 that the body is the physical you, the you the world sees. And then the soul; that is the psychic (not as in the hotline!) The *psyche* is the soulish you. That’s reasons, emotions, and I said “well” there; it should be will—the you with whom the world interacts.

And then finally the spirit—your life going somewhere, either driven there by the spirit of the world or by the Spirit of Christ. The spirit that lives within us drives us forward, either toward the world or toward Christ. Now let me just stop there. Do you have any questions about that diagram?

Ron Baling: Ted?

Ted: Yes?

Ron: When you were in #2 under the soul, you have reason, emotion and will.

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Ted: Yeah.

Ron: Then the spirit also tends to be will-oriented.

Ted: Yeah. I see the spirit as the life going someplace.

Don: With a small or a S?

Ted: With a small s. So It’s either the Spirit of Christ that’s driving us, or the spirit of the world that we have. I’m making you nervous.

Don: Yes.

Ted: Okay, fine. What makes you nervous about that?

Don: Well I tend to be a dichotomist.

Ted: Mm-hmm.

Don: I see soul and spirit in the same way as the image and likeness of God, or iniquity, transgression and sin. Synonymous; that kind of thing.

Ted: Well, that’s okay. There are two different opinions on this. I happen to have the other part. You and I have talked about this on the phone.

Don: Yes.

Ted: I thought we established that you were wrong, right? (*Laughter*) So in that diagram I have mislabeled a number of those. So I’m going to ask you to correct it. Do you see where it says Trinity? It says 1C. That should be 1B. And you see the line from the Trinity going down into the spirit. It says 1D.; that should be 1C. And then the line going from the circles down to spiritual people, it says 1E.’ that should be 1D. Strike 1G. And then on the left-hand side the lined arrow going from the person—the spirit, soul and body—it says 1F. Put in 1E.

So I’m going to follow along here, as it is talked about in 1 Corinthians the second chapter in verse 10. So that would be 2B. *“The Spirit searches diligently.”* And the Greek word for *searches* is “diligently examines everything.” So the Spirit—that is, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God,—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—He searches everything, even the depths. The Greek word is *bathos*. We get a bathysphere from that, so it means going very deep. So the Spirit diligently examines and discusses the very depths of God. *“For no one comprehends the thoughts.”*

Interesting. The word *thoughts* is not there in Greek; it’s the things of God. *“For no one comprehends the things of God except the Spirit of God.”* So in that upper right hand corner where we have the Trinity, that’s what’s going on within the Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They are examining, They are discussing; it’s an eternal conversation among the three Persons of the Trinity. And the Spirit searches everything, for no one comprehends that conversation that’s going on in the Trinity except the Spirit of God.

1 Corinthians the second chapter, the 12th verse: *“Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand.”* The word there is “to see” or “to perceive.” *“The things freely”*—the word there is *graciously*—given by grace; *“given to us by God.”*

So what happens is that out of that Trinity, out of that conversation, into our spirit—1C.; the movement there—comes the Spirit that is from God. So we’re made part of that conversation. It comes into our spirits, whether we feel it or not; it’s almost irrelevant. That conversation with God is happening—that searching, that examining that is going on in the mind of God—is coming into our spirits.

Let me see, where are we? Verse 12. *“For we have received not the spirit of the world.”* I said that. *“But the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things that are from God.”*

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So when the Holy Spirit comes into our spirits, and then begins to direct us to the things of God, the question is when did you and I receive that Spirit that is from God that Paul talks about in that verse? This is very important. God is having this insightful conversation and He is making us part of it as we receive that Spirit. But what time do we think we received that Spirit?

Brave Man: When we were born again?

Ted: Okay. Yes. I think that’s when we’re born again. Now some people would say that happens when we’re born again.

Don: Well, some people would say when we’re converted.

Ted: Yes, converted. What might that mean? How would we experience that?

Don: Any number of ways.

Ted: Some people would say that I’m born again when I ask Christ into my life.

Don: Yes, some people would say that.

Ted: Yes; that’s one way of saying it. That would be the most popular understanding of that. But others might say what?

Brave Man: Baptism.

Ted: At baptism, right. Okay, good; all right.

Brave Man: Maybe at the point of conviction. Before people make that decision, generally there’s a conviction. So do we make the choice, or in fact is the choice given to us by God?

Ted: Right.

Brave Man: Are we selected by God, and then we’re moved by that conviction?

Ted: Right.

Brave Man: Election.

Ted: Yes, from God’s side. It’s interesting because what’s going on is that the Spirit we received, we might not experience that in our souls—in our minds, in our feelings, in our decisions. That may not take place. But it will have an impact on it. I don’t believe the soul can make that decision until the Spirit has come into them.

Verse 13: *“And we impart this truth not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit.”* So that’s 1D. on the diagram. That wisdom is not taught by human wisdom. But we’re telling the body of Christ—spiritual people—the truths about God. And I guess the question would be this. What would be the primary characteristics of human wisdom versus spiritual wisdom? What is the difference between human wisdom—Paul says we’re not teaching that; we’re not imparting that to you, the church in humanism but in spiritualism;--what might be the difference in those two? If you have a pastor preaching he may be preaching spiritual wisdom and he may be preaching human wisdom. Okay.

Brave Man: Well, you said earlier that the spiritual wisdom that comes from God is the Trinity.

Ted: Yes, right.

Brave Man: And the human comes from what the world imparts.

Ted: Right. And what would be the difference, the primary difference, between those two: spiritual wisdom and human wisdom?

Don: Spiritual wisdom is from the word of God.

Ted: True.

Brave Man: The spiritual would be God-centered and the worldly would be self-centered.

Ted: Right. The spiritual is wisdom about God’s action. And human wisdom is about human action, even though that human action may be very religious. So he says that is what we receive.

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Ron: Ted, I was going to say that many religions, even Judaism, sort of teaches that works are a logical way of obtaining salvation or goodness.

Ted: Right. Works makes lots of sense because it just depends on your standard. If your standard is perfect. What does it say in 1 and 2 Peter? “You must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.” In Deuteronomy you must be as holy as God is. If that’s the standard, if God’s covenant with Abraham begins with “you will walk blamelessly before Me,” if that’s the standard, you’d better observe it. What most folks think today is that God gives us a standard and then He gives us some wiggle room on that. You know, you really don’t have to be completely holy or perfect; you just try your best. At least I’m trying.

But that’s not what Scripture says; hence the Jewish obsession with the law. I understand that when the Jewish community in Squirrel Hill started to expand, on telephone poles they would put markers so the Orthodox—the Hasidic Jews—would only walk so far on the Sabbath. They would know when they walked too far, because you’re not allowed to work on the Sabbath.

Now how do you figure out how far that is? Well you have commentaries. You have the Torah, the five books of the law, and then you have commentaries on that. And the commentaries begin to take on authority, so you know how far. Is it twenty paces, or is it 21 paces?

And you say, “Oh, that’s silly!” Well it’s not silly if you have to walk blamelessly before God, if that is the standard. And it is the standard.

And remember what Bruce used to say. He said, “How are we saved? Are we saved by works or by grace?” And he said, “We’re saved by works, but not my works.” Remember that?

Brave Man: Yes.

Ted: So human wisdom is about my works. And spiritual wisdom is about God’s work. I can’t, but He can. And we’re not going to lower the standard.

Ron: Ted, in the afterlife we will perform good works.

Ted: Right.

Ron: Our works here are not a way to obtain rewards because we have the rewards.

Ted: That’s right. And it’s because of the Spirit that was in us, driving the soul to think, to will and to emote according to the will of the Spirit.

1 Corinthians the second chapter, the fourteenth verse: “*The natural person*”—the word there is *soulish*; of the soul; the *psuche* man—“*does not accept.*” The Greek word there is a great word; it means “to accept or to grab hold of.” The soulish man--the person whose life is in the soul—that person does not welcome or take hold of the things of the Spirit of God. “*For they are folly to him. He is not able to understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.*”

Why are the things of the Spirit of God not understood by the natural man? Why does the natural man, the soulish man—that means a man of the soul—why are they not understood? Why are the things of God not understood by the soulish man?

Brave Man: They are not indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

Ted: That’s right. There’s no Spirit-to-spirit conversation. Don, that’s why there’s the third part, because there’s no spirit within that person. They’re taking it all in from the soul, from the mind, the will, the logic and the reason and the emotions; everything takes place within that. That person is not able to understand the things of God.

1 Corinthians 2:16: “*For who can understand the mind of God so as to instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.*”

Now that’s an extraordinary statement: that we have the mind of Christ. Now what does that mean, that we have the mind of Christ? Well, the definition of the mind—that Greek word *neus*

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—we get our word *neurology* from that—the Greek word *neus* means the faculties of perceiving and understanding; the intellectual faculty; understanding, reason; the power of considering and judging soberly, calmly and impartially. And we see that in the word used in Romans 12:2 which we know. *“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.”*

So the great advantage we have of having received the Holy Spirit is that Spirit begins to invade our souls. He begins to do battle with our minds; He does battle with our emotions. And He does battle with our wills, our powers to decide and to will. And as He does that, He begins to give us the mind of Christ, because our minds begin to change. Any thoughts about that?

#3: *The application of the soul and the spirit.* 1 Corinthians 3:1. *“But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people but people of the flesh, as infants.”* That word means simple-minded or immature. *“in Christ.”*

So understand that there are the lost and the saved. The lost is the natural or soulish person. That person is not in union with Christ. He’s without the life of Christ within. He’s filled with the spirit of the world; that’s the power that’s driving him. He’s drawing his identity and power from his soul. So who am I? Who I am is what I think, what I emote, and what I decide. He’s drawing his power and his identity from his soul. He can be very religious but natural—that is, soulish—and he’s headed to destruction. That is the soulish person.

But then there’s the spiritual person who is saved. That person is spiritual because he or she is in union with Christ. They are alive in Christ. It’s a person whose life is Christ, whose soul has been taken captive by the Spirit, daily being changed into the image of Christ—that is, my soul, my thinking, my feeling and my deciding are being taken captive by the Spirit.

We see that in 2 Corinthians the third chapter and the 18th verse. *“We all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, we all are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”*

And finally we are headed to the fullness of eternal life. The spiritual person, regardless of her or his level of spiritual maturity, gains his confidence from God’s promises found in these verses and in many other places.

Romans 8:29: *“Those He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers.”* So if God has foreknown us He has predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son. That is a great assurance and confidence for me.

Philippians 1:6: *“I am sure of this: that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”* Finally in Hebrews 12:1 and 2: *“Let us also lay aside every weight and sin which clings to us so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the Founder and the Perfecter of our faith.”* Jesus began my faith and He will finish my faith. All of these are promises in which we can have great confidence, that no matter what is going on in our souls, the Spirit within us is driving us forward and beginning to change us and shape us into the image of Christ.

But the spiritual person is always maturing. Did I spell out Hebrews 5 verse 12? Let’s look to that if I haven’t written that up: Hebrews 5:12-14. The writer of Hebrews says, *“By this time you”* (who have received this letter) *“ought to be teachers, and need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food. For everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the Word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the*

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mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.”

So the mature person—the mature Christian, the spiritual person who is mature—is one who is skilled in the Word and whose powers of discernment are trained, and to which the crucifixion of Christ is applying itself in their lives on a daily basis. That is the mature person who is the spiritual man.

But you can also be a spiritual man and you can be of the flesh, which Paul calls “infants in Christ,” behaving only in a human way, the one in which the soul has too much control. Paul goes on in 1 Corinthians the third chapter and the second verse. *“I fed you with milk but not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not ready.”*

So in this verse this is for those who are spiritual, those who are saved. But they are immature in their faith; they are of the flesh. They rely on the soul—what they feel, decide and think.

What might be considered milk? Paul says, “I fed you with milk. But you were not ready for solid food.” What would you consider to be milk versus solid food? What would be an example of those?

For the immature Christian we start with people who are only in their faith. They come to church; they come to know the Lord. The Lord’s Spirit lives in them. They are being changed into His likeness. But they are not ready for the solid food. What would be the difference between those two in the church?

Ron: Paul says it’s the elemental things; those would be the milk.

Ted: Okay; what would the elementary things be?

Ron: Faith in Christ. I can’t think where the list is now.

Gary Craig: What I see is salvation; what brings you to salvation?

Ted: Right; the things of first importance. So it would be the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Christ, right? What might also be milk?

Don: I think final judgment is mentioned in that verse.

Ted: Okay; that’s right. There is a reckoning. That’s right; God is loving and just. What else might be a—

Rich Clark: Washings; baptism.

Ted: Yes; he talks about the need of baptism. We would have to talk about what that means.

Brave Man: We have to go back to what you were saying about humanism versus spiritualism. And we see Christ throughout speaking because He is helping them to understand what God has done for them. In Matthew 5:43 *“You have heard it said: ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’”* He’s giving humanism on how to get along. In verse 48 He says, *“Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.”*

Ted: Right.

Brave Man: He switches then to the spiritual. This is a deeper understanding of that which they can’t comprehend right now.

Ted: Great! Excellent! I like that. Okay. When you give an example of milk leading to solid food, what might be solid food? Paul kind of shifts gears and goes from “Well, I talked to you a lot about milk; now I’m going to teach you about what is solid.”

Brave Man: The nature of God?

Ted: Yes. Who is God? One of the problems I think that we have is that in talking about the gospel with people is that their understanding of God does not bear any resemblance to God.

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Ron: I find, for lack of a better term, that they want to lessen the judgment. They actually remove the necessity of Christ, and they’re saying that people are unfairly judged.

Ted: Unfairly judged. That’s us; we’re unfairly judged. Yeah, right. I would say that the capacity for human self-deception is immense, that I’m really not that bad of a person.

I’ve told you this story before. But I remember that I was in a Bible study made up of folks that were from the University of Pittsburgh; that’s when I worked there. And there was a much beloved professor who died. And at the Bible study I was asked the question. “Ted, there was no reason to think that this guy was ever a Christian. Do you think he’ll end up in hell?”

And I said, “Well he will, if he didn’t know the Savior, if he hadn’t been born again.”

“But how could he? He was such a good person.”

I said, “Well, do any of you remember him talking about God and giving God the credit and the thanks for all that he achieved as an academic?” And nobody could remember. I said, “Well, he could go to hell because he was ungrateful, out of gratitude for God. He created the universe and he had no regard for Him.” Don, hold on a second.

In a conversation last week, without going into a lot of detail, I got into a conversation with a woman who was a lesbian. And she talked about when she first came out. She went to her pastor and she said, “Am I going to go to hell because I’m a lesbian?”

Well I didn’t say anything at that point, because the relationship was really odd; I just needed to establish a relationship. So I was letting her talk. But what would the answer be to that? “Am I going to hell because I’m a lesbian?” By the way the pastor couldn’t give her an answer. I ran into her a number of years later, and she said that he had come along in his thinking. He didn’t feel that she would deserve hell for that reason. Well, we all have that problem down, don’t we? But if you really got into the conversation with her, what might you have said? “Am I going to hell because I’m a lesbian?”

Brave Man: Wouldn’t you tell her that it’s because she doesn’t know Jesus?

Ted: Yeah. I mean, you could begin to say any number of things. “Yes, you could go to hell because of that. But there are a lot of other things that you go to hell for, and let me just lay it out for you. Are you guilty of any of these? I mean, maybe you’re going to find that being a lesbian is the least of your problems.” *(Laughter)*

And I think I shared this with you before. It’s like this whole political correctness that we’re in. People say, “Well Ted, you’re a racist.”

“Well, you’re exactly right. And I’m also an adulterer and a murderer and a blasphemer and a liar and a thief. I mean, where do you want to start?” People want to say that I’m flawed and failed. You’re exactly right; I’m terribly flawed and failed. What’s your solution to the problem of being flawed and failed?

Maybe you’re not a racist, but maybe you’re something else. Don, I’m sorry; go ahead.

Don: No, that’s okay. I was just going to say that as far as milk or solid food is concerned, would the doctrines of election cover solid food, or eschatology, that kind of thing?

Ted: I think that solid food almost always has to do with the nature of God and who He is. It’s studying into who God is, and wading deep into it. So when we talk about where it says and talks about only the Spirit knowing this, there are things here that are very deep. And most folks just roll through them and don’t think about them at all. *“For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.”* I mean, that’s a very profound thought. What is that all about?

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Or to say, “*We have the mind of Christ.*” What does that mean, that we have the mind of Christ? Do you think you have the mind of Christ? I mean, I think I do, simply in part now because the Spirit of God is invading and changing and crucifying the flesh to from that mind within me. So in time I begin to think God’s thoughts after Him.

Ron: Well that’s what I said. I think Don is right.

Ted: No, he’s not. *(Laughter)*

Ron: It’s the idea of putting God’s purposes first and acquiescing to them and trying to understand them and then agreeing with them, whether it be election or the problem of evil. You just can’t get around that without the impression—

Ted: I was once talking to a young woman who was a Christian, but who said she had a very difficult time not being pro-choice in the abortion argument. And we finally went back and forth on this, and she finally made a very interesting statement. She said, “I don’t think it’s fair that God made women to have babies.” *(Laughter)*

Ron: This wasn’t a joke, right? She was serious about this?

Ted: I mean, this is not a problem with abortion; that might be the milk. This is a much bigger problem that she has. It’s who God is and what He wants, and beginning to think His thoughts after Him. I mean, there are a lot of things that I think God is not very fair about from my perspective. But it’s irrelevant what I think. It’s all about the kingdom of God; the mustard seed being the kingdom of God rather than the mustard seed being about my journey. But that’s solid food; you get there from that.

Jim Hamilton: You keep using the word God, as though there were no difference between the three elements in the Godhead.

Ted: Yes.

Jim: I want to think about Christ because I think He’s forgiving. God’s pretty tough. *(Laughter)* I don’t think there’s anything I’m going to do to satisfy His requirements. I think I can handle it as far as Jesus is concerned, and the Spirit is going to help me. But I don’t think the Father is going to be too forgiving of the way I live my life.

Don: Whoa, whoa!

Ted: Don, does that strike you as a little heretical?

Don: Yes.

Ted: No; I understand. But can anybody answer what Jim has just said?

Ron: I think that God has said that God will judge us all according to our deeds.

Ted: Yeah.

Ron: But He’s not going to punish us for our deeds. He’s not going to—I’m looking for the right word

Brave Man: Condemn.

Ron: Condemn, thank you. He’s not going to condemn us for our deeds.

Ted: Right.

Jim: Well, thank God for the Son.

Don: Okay. We agree on that, right?

Brave Man: When Jesus said, “*Be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect,*” it’s not just the Father.

Rich: But the Father is the One who loves us so much.

Brave Man: That He sent His Son.

Ron: Amen.

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Ted: The two qualities of God: justice and love. Remember that God adds all of those to His promises. The Spirit has justice and love; the Father has justice and love; the Son has justice and love. And They are balancing that out for our sake, out of great mercy and love. What is that verse in James that says that mercy and justice kiss? I’m sorry.

Don Maurer: It’s a Psalm.

Ted: Oh gosh, we’ve run out of time. Let me just try to wrap this up. 1 Corinthians the third chapter and the third verse: *“For you are still in the flesh.”* That means you’re saved, but you’re still in the flesh. You’re not natural, which would make you unsaved. But you are still in the flesh. *“For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way?”*

Now as I read that I thought to myself, this is how the Corinthians were described in the first chapter, the third chapter, the sixth chapter and the thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians; I just pulled it up. This is how the Corinthians are described: *“sanctified in Christ Jesus.” “God’s temple.” “God’s Spirit dwells in you.” “Washed, justified.” “Baptized into one body.” “And now you are the body of Christ.”* Those are all descriptors of who the Corinthians are. And yet they are of the flesh.

He gives two examples of how they are in the flesh: jealousy and strife. Jealousy, from the Greek word *zealos*, meaning zeal; they were very zealous, but they were zealous for the wrong things. And they were full of strife. It’s interesting; that word can mean “affection for dispute.”

Now I’m wondering how many of you have an affection for dispute? How many of you watch YouTube where there is always (somebody) who has an affection for dispute? I have an affection for dispute. But that’s being in the flesh.

Now it gets worse than that, because if you read in 2 Corinthians the twelfth chapter he finished up this letter. This is a tough letter, and this is what he writes: *“Here for the third time I am ready to come to you,”* he says to the Corinthians. *“And I will not be a burden. For I seek not what is yours, but you.”* Here is what he says. *“For I fear that perhaps when I come that you may find me not as you wish. But perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, deceit and disorder.”*

Now that’s somebody who is already in the Spirit, but that’s the way he acts. *“I fear that when I come again that my God may humble me before you, and I may have to mourn over many of those who have sinned earlier and have not repented.”*

What was the problem in 1 Corinthians in the church? There were many problems, but what was the sexual problem in the church? A man was having sex with his mother or his mother-in-law; we can’t know for sure. But here it talks about those who have sinned earlier and not repented. Now what had they not repented of? *“Impurity, sexual immorality and sensuality that they had practiced.”*

So it’s very hard for us to get our minds around this: that a person can be spiritual, yet practicing those things. But that’s exactly what he says there. So it’s worse than having strife and an affection for dispute. And it’s worse than having jealousy. There are all kinds of other things going on in this church. And yet he never says, “I’m talking to you as unsaved people.”

But of course he goes on to say, *“Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith.”* And so there’s accountability; I’m not saying there’s no accountability. But it’s amazing how much there is under that umbrella of being spiritual versus being soulish, because the soulish man has no hope. The spiritual man has hope. No matter what he’s doing, he has hope. Why? Why does the spiritual man have hope?

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Ron: He’s forgiven.

Ted: And the Spirit of God is within him.

Ron: Yes.

Ted: And that’s where his life is going. The natural man, the soulish man, does all these same things, but there is an exit into hell for him. The spiritual man has hope that he will be changed, or that he will repent, or he will leave the faith.

So I’m going to finish up there. Thank you for your patience. Let us pray. Lord Jesus Christ, we thank You that You have made us to be spiritual people by rebirth through Your Holy Spirit. And may that Spirit taking us to You, conforming us, crucifying the flesh, that we may reflect Your image to the world. And we pray this in Your name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen. (*Applause*)